**UNITED NATIONS** **S**

**Security Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/802
16 October 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 16 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ANGOLA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention the true facts about the alleged tensions along the border between the Republic of Angola and the Republic of Congo-Brazzaville:

1. Taking into account the serious deterioration of the situation in the Congo, the Government of Angola has taken some special military measures along the border between the Angolan province of Cabinda and the Republic of the Congo.

2. Angola is following closely and with serious concern the evolution of the internal situation in that neighbour and sister country, where intense fighting is taking place between opposing troops loyal to President Pascal Lissouba and former President Denis Sassou Nguesso since 5 June 1997.

3. The present situation in the Congo is a serious one, but third countries cannot and should not be blamed for it. Angola has all along lent its unequivocal and full support to the efforts for international mediation led by President El Haj Omar Bongo, assisted by Ambassador Shannon, Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, with a view to finding a political and negotiated settlement. In so doing, Angola wishes the rapid restoration of peace and stability in the central subregion and the creation of the necessary conditions for the well-being of the Congolese people.

4. As is well known, Angola was, for many years, a victim of destabilizing actions waged by the so-called "FLEC" as well as by the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) with the backing of the then Republic of Zaire and the Republic of Congo-Brazzaville. On 13 October 1997, in exercising its right of self-defence, one unit of the Angolan Armed Forces persecuted armed groups of the FLEC and UNITA,

following attacks against bordering localities in Cabinda province, from the Republic of the Congo. This action resulted in some casualties against the armed groups and the Angolan forces returned immediately to their base in Cabinda.

5. Therefore, the Angolan Armed Forces did not whatsoever launch any attacks against the localities of the Republic of the Congo as mentioned in the letter of the Permanent Mission of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council on 13 October 1997.

6. The Government of the Republic of Angola strongly rejects these accusations which are baseless and senseless.

I should like to request that the text of the present letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Afonso VAN-DUNEM "MBINDA"
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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